

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document is a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) which has been prepared to evaluate potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed Whisper Creek Subdivision project, located in the unincorporated area of Placer County within the Dry Creek-West Placer Community Planning Area. The project proposes the subdivision of four parcels of ± 60.6 acres into 104 single-family residential lots, eight open space lots, one open space/recreation lot, three landscape lots, and one private street lot.

1.1 Purpose and Intended Uses of the Environmental Impact Report

This Draft EIR has been prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), as amended (Public Resources Code Section 21000, et seq.), the procedures for the implementation of CEQA set forth in the Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA Guidelines, 14 California Code of Regulations [CCR] Section 15000 et seq.), and Placer County's Environmental Review ordinance to address the environmental effects associated with the proposed Whisper Creek Subdivision. Placer County is the Lead Agency for the purposes of preparing this Draft EIR under Section 15051 of the CEQA Guidelines.

Per the CEQA Guidelines, the purpose of this Draft EIR is to inform the public agency decision makers and the general public about the proposed project and its significant environmental effects, possible ways to minimize those significant effects, and to describe reasonable alternatives. It is not the intent of a Draft EIR to recommend either approval or denial of a project. The Draft EIR will be subject to a 45-day public review period. Written comments provided by the general public and public agencies will be evaluated, and written responses will be prepared for all comments received during the designated comment period. Upon completion of the evaluation and comment period, a Final EIR will be prepared for certification by the Placer County Board of Supervisors of compliance with CEQA, and for review and consideration as part of the decision making process for the proposed project.

1.2 Environmental Review Process

CEQA applies to discretionary actions of public agencies. Section 15357 of the CEQA Guidelines describes a Discretionary Project as a project which requires the exercise of judgment when a public agency decides to approve or disapprove an activity. The Lead Agency is the public agency that has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving a proposed project. CEQA Guidelines Section 15051 states that if a project will be carried out by a non-governmental person or entity, then the Lead Agency shall be the public agency with the greatest responsibility for supervising or approving the project as a whole. Placer County is responsible for reviewing and approving this development and is therefore the Lead Agency for the project.

As part of the initial environmental review process for the proposed project, an Initial Study and Notice of Preparation (NOP) were circulated by Placer County in June and July of 2004. An Initial Study is conducted by a Lead Agency to determine if a project may have a significant effect on the environment (CEQA Guidelines Section 15063). According to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064, an EIR shall be prepared for a project subject to CEQA when the Initial Study indicates there is substantial evidence, in light of the whole record before the agency, that the

proposed project may have a significant effect on the environment. The NOP was circulated and a scoping meeting was held to inform responsible agencies and the public of the proposed project and to solicit comments on issues of concern to be evaluated in the Draft EIR.

The Draft EIR will be subject to a 45-day public review period. Written comments provided by the general public and public agencies will be evaluated, and written responses will be prepared for all comments received during the designated comment period. Written comments on the Draft EIR should be submitted to Placer County at the following address:

Placer County Planning Department
Attn: Charlene Daniels, Project Planner
3091 County Center Drive
Auburn, CA 95603

Written comments received on the Draft EIR, and responses to comments, will be included in a Final EIR. The Final EIR will be considered by Placer County prior to approval or denial of the proposed project.

1.3 Focus, Scope, Organization and Content of the EIR

For purposes of function and clarity, this Draft EIR has been divided into the following sections:

- **Executive Summary**, provides a brief overview of the proposed project, the environmental analysis of the proposed project, and a summary of the alternatives considered.
- **Chapter 1.0, Introduction**, provides information related to the purpose and intended uses of the EIR, the environmental review process, and the focus, scope, organization and content of the EIR.
- **Chapter 2.0, Project Description**, provides a precise location and boundaries of the proposed project; a general description of the project's technical, economic, and environmental characteristics.
- **Chapter 3.0, Environmental Analysis**, describes the potential for the proposed project to result in significant impacts. This portion of the Draft EIR is organized in accordance with the applicable environmental resources. As described in the Initial Study dated June 2004, the proposed project is not expected to result in significant impacts on energy resources. The balance of the environmental evaluation in the Draft EIR is directed at the potential for the proposed project to result in significant impacts to aesthetics, transportation/traffic, air quality, noise, biological resources, cultural resources, geology/soils, hazards & hazardous materials, hydrology/water quality, public services, recreation, and utilities/service systems. This assessment of impacts considers the regulatory framework, environmental baseline conditions at the time of publication of the NOP, thresholds for significance recommended by CEQA and other relevant statutes and regulations, and the potential to reduce or avoid significant impacts.
- **Chapter 4.0, Cumulative Impacts**, describes impacts that are created as a result of the combination of the project evaluated in the Draft EIR together with other projects

causing related impacts. When the combined cumulative impact associated with the project's incremental effect and the effects of other projects is not significant, the discussion will briefly indicate why the cumulative impact is not significant and is not discussed in further detail in the Draft EIR.

- **Chapter 5.0, Other Discussions Required by CEQA**, includes a discussion on effects found not to be significant, and should the proposed project be implemented, any significant environmental effects which cannot be avoided, any significant irreversible environmental changes, any irreversible commitments of resources that would be involved, and any growth-inducing impacts.
- **Chapter 6.0, Alternatives to the Proposed Project**, describes reasonable alternatives to the proposed project or to the location of the project that would attain most of the basic objectives but would avoid or substantially reduce any of the significant effects of the project, including a "no project" alternative. Although not capable of meeting most of the basic objectives of the proposed project, the no project alternative was analyzed in accordance with the requirements of CEQA.
- **Chapter 7.0, References**, lists all sources used in the preparation of this Draft EIR.
- **Chapter 8.0, Report Preparation**, lists the persons and firms responsible for the preparation of the Draft EIR and identifies all federal, state, or local agencies, other organizations, and private individuals consulted.

1.4 Terminology Used in the EIR

This Draft EIR uses the following terminology to denote the environmental effects of the proposed project:

Less Than Significant Impact: An impact which does not result in a substantial and adverse change in the physical environment. This impact does not require the implementation of mitigation measures.

Potentially Significant Impact: An impact that may have a "substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15382). The existence of a potentially significant impact requires mitigation to be proposed that would reduce the magnitude of the potential impact.

Significant Impact: Substantial and adverse environmental change is likely to occur. A significant impact requires mitigation to reduce the magnitude of the impact.

Significant and Unavoidable Impact: Substantial and adverse environmental change is likely to occur. While mitigation may reduce the magnitude of the impact, there is no feasible mitigation that would mitigate the impact to less than significant.